

Reptiles of Greatest Conservation Need



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Common Musk Turtle *Sternotherus odoratus*

STATUS: Apparently secure within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: New England to Southern Ontario to Southern Florida; west to Wisconsin and Texas.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: The common musk turtle *aka* "sinkpot" prefers bodies of water such as lakes, ponds, and quiet streams. They are secretive and rarely bask, but can be found as far up as six feet in trees near the water. They nest February to June, depending on latitude and mate underwater. Musk turtles lay 1-9 off-white with stark white band, thick-shelled, elliptical eggs under rotting stumps or in a wall of a muskrat lodge. They consume mostly animal proteins when young, but as adults they tend to be omnivorous. Typical food choices are insects, crayfish, snails, fish, tadpoles, and nearly anything it can catch.

THREATS: Intensive development, nitrification, altered drainage, vegetative changes and pollution. Individuals are regularly injured or killed from fishing and from contact with boat propellers.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Appropriate management of suitable wetland complexes, and educating the public regarding turtle-safe boating practices would help in conserving this as yet common species. Further focused studies are needed to determine precise status and habitat use within the District.

SITE MAP: 1, 3, 7, 9

REFERENCES: 1 – 7



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Bog Turtle *Clemmys muhlenbergii*

STATUS: The US Fish & Wildlife Service has listed the northern population (New York and Massachusetts to Maryland and Delaware) as "Threatened" and the southern population (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia) as "Threatened due to similarity of appearance." Nearly half of the historic occurrences in Maryland have been extirpated. Presumed extirpated within the District of Columbia. Cryptic, hard to find even when present in good numbers; easily overlooked.

RANGE: New York to North Carolina and extremely northeastern Georgia.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: Bog turtles prefer clear-cool, shallow, slow moving waters and inhabit marshy meadows, swamps, sphagnum bogs and pastures with soft, muddy bottoms. They breed late April to early June. They lay 2 to 5 (usually 2-3) eggs in June to July. The eggs are left unattended to develop and hatch. Their diet includes snails, worms, slugs, millipedes, plant seeds and carrion.

THREATS: Intensive development, nitrification, altered drainage, vegetative changes and pollution. Decline is due primarily to loss, degradation, and fragmentation of habitat, and excessive (and illegal) collecting for the pet trade.

CONSERVATION ACTION: This species would benefit from the acquisition and appropriate management of suitable wetland complexes. Selective cutting, burning (if possible), periodic mowing, and grazing may be appropriate management techniques for maintaining habitat. Establishing location and long-term studies of populations within the District is urgently needed.

SITE MAP: 1, 5, 10

REFERENCES: 1 – 5



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Corn Snake *Elaphe guttata guttata*

STATUS: The status of corn snakes within the District of Columbia is undetermined.

RANGE: In North America they can be found from New Jersey west to Colorado and south to the Florida Keys and from Nebraska to Central Mexico.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: Corn snakes prefer wooded areas, wood lots, rocky slopes, deciduous forests, and pine barrens. It is semi-arboreal (tree climbing), but spends much of its time underground, resting in or prowling through rodent burrows or other subterranean passageways. It breeds in the spring. Eight to twenty eggs are laid in late May or early June with the eggs hatching in August or September. It feeds on small mammals, birds, frogs, and lizards.

THREATS: Corn snakes are often mistaken for copperheads and sometimes killed because of this. Sometimes they are captured in the wild to be sold as pets. However, there are many snake breeders, so wild capturing does not pose a serious threat to this species.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 6

REFERENCES: 1 - 5



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Eastern Box Turtle *Terrapene carolina*



STATUS: Large range in eastern North America; locally abundant in most parts of its range, but declining in some areas. Vulnerable within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Northeast Massachusetts to Georgia, west to Michigan, Illinois, and Tennessee.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: Box turtles favor open woodlands, wetland areas, and meadows. They prefer moist environments and spend most of their time buried in leaves and dirt. In hot, dry weather they can be found enter water, mud, and damp ground. They nest May to July and lay 3-8 eggs (elliptical in shape and about 3.5 cm long) in loose soil about 7 cm deep. They are omnivores and eat everything from grass, leaves, crustaceans, berries, mushrooms, earthworms, insects, slugs, snails, amphibians, lizards, and fish.

THREATS: Recent declines are a result of habitat loss and fragmentation and over-collecting for the pet trade.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Establishing locations and long-term studies of populations within the District is urgently needed.

SITE MAP: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

REFERENCES: 1 - 6

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Eastern Garter Snake *Thamnophis sirtalis*



STATUS: Apparently secure within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Ranges over much of North America, from southern Canada to southern California, central Utah, Chihuahua, Texas, Gulf Coast, and southern Florida. Resident within the District of Columbia.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: The eastern garter snake can be found in wet woodlands, meadows, marshes and along drainage ditches and streams. It is diurnal usually hunting and living in moist habitats. They can tolerate very cold weather but will hibernate during the winter. During this period, garter snakes will come together in large numbers to hibernate. They breed in the spring and the young are born alive in late summer or autumn. There may be 10-70 or more in a litter. They feed on frogs, toads, salamanders, earthworms, mice, minnows, bird eggs, and carrion.

THREATS: Little is known about the threats facing this rather widespread and adaptable species within the District of Columbia.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Due to the rather generalist ecology of this widespread species, many management activities could potentially benefit the snake. Basic monitoring of local populations is needed with the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 4, 5, 7, 8

REFERENCES: 1 - 4



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Eastern Hognose Snake *Heterodon platirhinos*

STATUS: Possibly extirpated within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: From southern Pennsylvania to Florida, west to the prairie lands of Texas to southern Iowa and Wisconsin.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: The Eastern hognose snake prefers sandy areas, but can be found in fields, open grassy areas adjacent woods, and open pine, mixed pine-hardwood, and hardwood forests. It breeds in the spring. The eastern hognose snake is oviparous and lays 10 - 30 eggs in sandy areas. Its prey consists of frogs, toads and insects.

THREATS: Little is known about the threats facing this species within the District of Columbia.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 2, 4, 8

REFERENCES: 1 - 3



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Eastern Mud Turtle *Kinosternon subrubrum*

STATUS: Apparently secure within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Found as far north as Long Island down to south Florida and around the Gulf coast to eastern parts of Texas.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: The mud turtle is semi-aquatic and spends time on land and water environments. Shallow waterways such as streams and marshes serve as ideal environments as does ponds, rivers, and lakes. It has a distinct tolerance to brackish water. Mud turtles are even found in temporary wetlands, burrowing into the mud when the wetland dries. Adults mate in spring, and in June the females lay between one and six elliptical eggs in holes dug in sandy soil or among disintegrating plants. Mud turtles feed on a wide variety of aquatic organisms and probably also eat aquatic plants.

THREATS: Main threats are loss of habitat (largely a result of water pollution and wetland drainage), and migrating individuals killed by vehicular traffic.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Recommended habitat management activities include elimination of barriers that hinder migration between ponds and nest or hibernation sites, placement of "turtle crossing" signs to warn motorists of the turtle's presence in key areas, and maintenance of open areas for nesting. Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 1, 3

REFERENCES: 1 - 5



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Spotted Turtle *Chrysemys guttata*

STATUS: The spotted turtle is locally common in many portions of its overall range, but apparently declining in some areas. Critically imperiled within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: The range extends from southern Maine and extreme southern Ontario west to Illinois and south to northern Florida. Isolated colonies can be found in southern Quebec, southern Ontario, central Illinois, central Georgia and north-central Florida.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: Spotted turtles prefer marshy meadows, bogs, swamps, ponds, ditches and other small bodies of still water. They need clean, shallow, slow-moving water with muddy or mucky bottoms with some aquatic vegetation. Courtship begins in March to May, and in June females deposit up to 8 (typically 3-5) flexible-shelled, elliptical eggs. Their diets consist of larval amphibians, slugs, snails, crayfish, insects, worms, and carrion.

THREATS: Primary threats to this species are habitat fragmentation and alteration, grazing, draining and filling of wetlands, road mortality, collecting, artificial control of water levels, and pollution. The small wetlands favored by this species are often not protected by wetland conservation laws.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Wetland restoration and landscape level planning can increase the connections among suitable habitat patches for this species; this could help improve the security of existing populations. Preventing the invasion of non-native plants (e.g., purple loosestrife) and eradicating them from spotted turtle habitat is essential. Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 1, 3

REFERENCES: 1 - 4



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Eastern Ribbon Snake *Thamnophis sauritus*

STATUS: Apparently secure within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: East of the Mississippi River, from Michigan, southern Ontario, and southern Maine south to the Florida Keys and southeastern Louisiana. Resident within the District of Columbia.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: The eastern ribbon snake is a semi-aquatic snake that prefers wet meadows, marshes, bogs, ponds, weedy lake shorelines, swamps, and shallow-meandering streams. It likes to bask in bush and when startled it will glide swiftly across the water's surface. Mating takes place in the spring with 3 - 26 young born live in July and August. It feeds on frogs, salamanders, and small fish.

THREATS: Little is known about the threats facing this species within the District of Columbia.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 1, 3, 4, 5

REFERENCES: 1 - 3



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Eastern Worm Snake *Carphophis amoenus* *amoenus*

STATUS: Apparently secure within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Southern New England southward through the Carolinas to northern Georgia, and westward to southern Ohio and northeastern Mississippi. Resident within the District of Columbia.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: The eastern worm snake prefers moist forest and hillsides near streams. They will hide under rocks or debris, rotting logs, or burrow underground. The worm snakes breeds in the spring and fall and lay one to eight eggs in early summer. Their diets consist of earthworms and soft-bodied insects.

THREATS: Little is known about the threats facing this species within the District of Columbia.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 4, 6

REFERENCES: 1 - 6



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Eastern Fence Lizard *Sceloporus undulatus*

STATUS: Possibly extirpated within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Ranges from New York to Florida, west to Utah and Arizona, north to South Dakota and central Indiana, south to Gulf Coast and Zacatecas.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: Fence lizards prefer rocky, wooded areas, dry hillsides, and sunny, open woodlots. They are most common along forest edges and often inhabit rotting logs or stumps. Mating occurs in April or May. Five to 15 eggs are laid in soil and rotting logs and under surface debris in June, July, or early August. Fence lizards mainly eat spiders, but also consume grasshoppers, beetles, caterpillars and snails.

THREATS: Very little data exists on this species within the District of Columbia.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Establishing location and long-term studies of populations within the District is urgently needed.

SITE MAP: 4, 6

REFERENCES: 1 - 5



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Five-lined Skink *Eumeces fasciatus*



STATUS: Apparently secure within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Found from southern New Mexico to northern Florida, west to east Texas, north to Kansas, Wisconsin and Southern Ontario.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: Five-lined skinks prefer humid woodlands with decaying leaf litter, stumps and logs. They like open hardwood forest, forest edges, and cutover woodlands. Mating takes place in the spring, and the female lays from 4 - 14 eggs in late spring or early summer. Their diets consist of crickets, grasshoppers, beetles, earthworms, snails, slugs, isopods, caterpillars, other lizards, and small mice.

THREATS: Little is known about the threats facing this species within the District of Columbia.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Basic monitoring of local populations is needed with the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 2

REFERENCES: 1 - 4

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Northern Black Racer *Coluber constrictor* *constrictor*

STATUS: Apparently secure within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Found in the eastern part of North America from Canada to Florida.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: The northern black racer can be found in a variety of habitats including forests, open areas, and edges of forests near open fields. It is most commonly found in open land, such as meadows, fields, and farmland. It has no known association with waterways. This snake mates in May and June and female lays 10-20 eggs in late June or July. It feeds primarily on small rodents, frogs, and young snakes, and is a valuable destroyer of pests.

THREATS: Little is known about the threats facing this rather widespread and adaptable species within the District of Columbia.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 4, 6

REFERENCES: 1 - 5



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Northern Brown Snake *Storeria dekayi*

STATUS: Apparently secure within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: From southern Quebec and New England southward to North Carolina, and westward to Ohio and eastern Kentucky.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: Northern brown snakes can be found in dense forest to open grassland. They are most common in and around abandoned buildings and development, but can also be found in empty lots, under trash, logs, and rocks. Most northern brown snakes are commonly seen near aquatic environments. They breed in spring and give birth to 3-20 living young at a time. They feed on slugs, earthworms, slugs, snails, soft-bodied insects and larger specimens will eat frogs and tadpoles.

THREATS: Little is known about the threats facing this rather widespread and adaptable species within the District of Columbia.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 2, 5, 6, 8

REFERENCES: 1 - 5



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Northern Copperhead *Agkistrodon contortrix*

STATUS: The northern copperhead has no special status federally. It is critically imperiled within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: From Mexico north into the central United States and in the east from the tip of Florida to the New England states.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: Northern copperheads prefer terrestrial and semi-aquatic habitats that have rocky areas with debris-covered slopes or rock outcrops. They also can be found in wood piles, sawdust piles, rock piles and brush piles. Mating can occur in the late spring or early fall, but females can store sperm for long periods of time. Thus, several males may successfully mate with a single female resulting in multiple paternities within a single litter. Young snakes are usually born in September and October. Copperheads are carnivores surviving on a diet of mice, lizards, birds, amphibians, insects, and small snakes.

THREATS: Little is known about the threats facing this species within the District of Columbia.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 2, 5

REFERENCES: 1 - 4



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Eastern Painted Turtle *Chrysemys picta picta*

STATUS: This species is represented by many and/or large occurrences throughout much of its large range. Very abundant in suitable habitat in most areas. Secure within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Found across the entire North American continent, occurring from southern Canada to northern Mexico and from the northwestern to the southeastern United States.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: The eastern painted turtle is found in slow-moving, shallow water (streams, marshes, ponds, lakes, or creeks) containing soft bottom, suitable basking sites, and aquatic vegetation. It may colonize seasonally-flooded areas near permanent water. Mating occurs at the bottom of the body of water and egg-laying takes place during June and July. Painted Turtles lay a clutch containing between 4 to 20 eggs in open areas that are exposed to the sun for much of the day. In general, it eats insects, crayfish, mollusks, and aquatic vegetation.

THREATS: Localized threats from habitat degradation, road mortality, and human associated increase in predators (e.g., raccoons) are causes for concern.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Recommended habitat management activities include placement of "turtle crossing" signs to warn motorists of the turtles' presence in key areas. Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 1, 2, 3

REFERENCES: 1 - 5



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Northern Ringneck Snake *Diadophis punctatus edwardsii*

STATUS: Apparently secure within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Occurs throughout eastern and central North America. The range extends from Nova Scotia and southern Quebec and Ontario to south-central Mexico, covering the entire eastern seaboard except for areas along the gulf coasts of south Texas and northeast Mexico. The range extends laterally to the Pacific coast except for large areas in drier regions of the western United States and Mexico.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: The preferred habitat for the northern ringneck snake consists of rocky ledges near rivers in shady or heavily wooded damp areas. It usually hides under logs, rocks, leaf litter, or matted plants. Mating occurs in spring or fall (delayed fertilization is possible) and eggs are laid in June or early July. Females lay eggs about 3-10 eggs laid at one time. This snake's diet consists of small salamanders, lizards, and frogs, as well as earthworms and juvenile snakes of other species.

THREATS: Little is known about the threats facing this rather widespread and adaptable species within the District of Columbia.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 2

REFERENCES: 1 - 4



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Queen Snake *Regina septemvittata*

STATUS: Critically imperiled within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Pennsylvania west to southeastern Wisconsin, south through much of the eastern United States to the Gulf Coast.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: Queen snakes have a very specific habitat. They are found in or near shallow, clear spring-fed streams with moderate to fast currents and rocky bottoms. They can also be found in canals or ponds. Mating can take place during the fall or spring; Females produce 5-23 young (on average 6-20 young) born in August or early September. They feed almost exclusively on freshly molted crayfish.

THREATS: Habitat loss, especially due to urban encroachment, is the most significant threat to this species in the United States. Their extremely specialized habitat requirements restrict them to certain areas, with large gaps of unfavorable habitat in between populations. Water pollution is another potential limiting factor, since increased runoff and siltation in many streams have resulted in die-off of crayfish prey. They are susceptible to mercury toxicity through eating mercury-contaminated crayfish and other pollutants are able to pass directly through their highly permeable skin.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Effective management of appropriate habitat is the urgent conservation requirement for this species. Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 1, 2

REFERENCES: 1 - 5



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Eastern Redbelly Turtle

Pseudemys rubriventris
(*Chrysemys rubriventris*)

AKA: Northern Red-bellied Turtle
Plymouth Red-bellied Turtle

STATUS: The Plymouth Red-bellied Turtle, a population of the Eastern Redbelly Turtles (sometimes known as *Pseudemys rubriventris bangsi*), is on the U.S. Endangered Species List. Apparently secure within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Mid-Atlantic coastal plain from southern New Jersey to northeastern North Carolina, and west in the Potomac River.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: The redbelly turtle prefers relatively large, deep creeks; rivers, ponds, lakes and marshes with ample basking sites. This species tolerates brackish water conditions, but is usually a freshwater turtle. It nests June to July and lays 8-20 elliptical eggs. It feeds on a variety of aquatic animals and plants, but fish are not normally part of the diet.

THREATS: Limited habitat from industrial uses, urbanization, drainage and/or filling of wetlands and pollution.

CONSERVATION ACTION: This species would benefit from appropriate management of suitable wetland complexes. Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 1, 3

REFERENCES: 1 - 4



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Rough Green Snake *Opheodrys aestivus*



STATUS: The population trend for the rough green snake is probably relatively stable overall, with local declines associated with habitat loss. Apparently secure within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Southern New Jersey west to Eastern Kansas, south to Florida Keys west through Texas into Eastern Mexico.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: The rough green snake can be found in areas of thick, green vegetation. Small trees, bushes, briar patches, and tangles of vines are their favorite areas. They are attracted to lush green vegetation overhanging streams, but can also be found in gardens and are able to maintain their populations in developed areas as long as adequate greenery is left in backyards and parks. The rough green snake lays up to a dozen eggs in rotting logs or stumps during June or July. The eggs hatch in late summer. They mainly consume grasshoppers, crickets, caterpillars, spiders, small frogs, and snails or slugs.

THREATS: Clearing of wooded wetlands and wooded borders of aquatic habitats is a potential threat, as is pesticide application in such habitats.

CONSERVATION ACTION: The protection of several large tracts of optimal habitat well dispersed throughout its range is the management requirement for this species. Discourage application of pesticides in or near wooded wetlands should be discouraged.

SITE MAP: 2, 4, 5

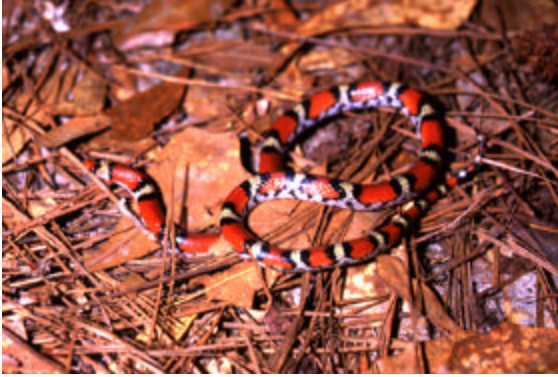
REFERENCES: 1 - 3



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Northern Scarlet Snake *Cemophora coccinea copei*

STATUS: Possibly extirpated within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Extreme southern Delaware to the Florida panhandle, west to Louisiana, eastern Oklahoma and extreme eastern Texas.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: The scarlet snake prefers a hardwood habitat mixed or pine forest and adjacent open areas with sandy or loamy well-drained soils. It may occasionally be found under rotting logs or stones or unearthed by plows. They lay 3-8 elongated leathery eggs in June that hatch in late summer. Eggs of other reptiles appear to be their preferred food.

THREATS: Little is known about the threats facing this species within the District of Columbia.

CONSERVATION ACTION: Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 2

REFERENCES: 1 - 4



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Timber Rattlesnake *Crotalus horridus*



STATUS: This species has a large range in the eastern United States, but occurrence is spotty in most regions. It is declining or extirpated in all northeastern states. Possibly extirpated within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Most of eastern half of the United States from southern New Hampshire south through the Appalachian Mountains to northern Georgia and west to southwestern Wisconsin and northeastern Texas.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: Timber rattlesnakes inhabit deciduous forests in rocky terrain. They occupy heavily vegetated, rock outcrops on partially forested hillsides. Mating occurs in the spring and fall and females give birth to 4-14 (average 9) young every three to five years. Young are born during late August to mid-September. Rattlesnakes eat mice, rats, squirrels, rabbits, bats and other small mammals.

THREATS: Development, illegal collecting, and disturbance by recreational users are the most common threats as is timber rattlers low rate of reproduction. Limited appropriate habitat and altered habitat by human activities also threatened this species.

CONSERVATION ACTION: There is an urgent need for population surveys for this species within the District to identify existing den sites, assess population size, reproductive success and any threats to existing habitat.

SITE MAP: 2

REFERENCES: 1 - 4



District of Columbia

Reptiles Fact Sheet

Wood Turtle *Clemmys insculpta*



STATUS: The wood turtle is apparently declining throughout its range, but survey data are scanty. Possibly extirpated within the District of Columbia.

RANGE: Original North American range extends from Nova Scotia to eastern Minnesota, south to northeastern Iowa, east to Virginia and north to New York.

LOCAL HABITAT: Further monitoring needed to determine current range within the District of Columbia.

SPECIES ECOLOGY: The wood turtle prefers lowland hardwood forests and open meadows associated with moderate to fast current streams and rivers with sand or gravel substrates. They are freshwater turtles that can use clear streams, rivers and woodland ponds that are relatively remote. They mate in spring and fall, in or out of water. A clutch of 4 to 17 white, smooth eggs laid in June will hatch in September. Wood turtles are omnivores that eat insects, mollusks, carrion, worms, blackberries, dandelions, mullen sorrel, strawberries, sedges, grasses, filamentous algae, and mushrooms.

THREATS: Threats include heavy bank erosion, increased small mammal populations (nest predators), water pollution, and vehicular traffic. Formerly reduced by biological supply houses and pet trade industries.

CONSERVATION ACTION: May benefit from watershed management aimed at reducing erosion and sedimentation. Habitat improvement is probably best aimed at nesting, basking, and hibernating sites. Basic monitoring of local populations is needed within the District of Columbia.

SITE MAP: 1, 2, 3,

REFERENCES: 1 - 5